

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-3 and 6-17 are pending. Claims 1 and 2 have been amended. Claims 4 and 5 have been canceled without prejudice. No new matter has been introduced.

Applicants note with appreciation the indicated allowability of original claims 4 and 5 if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claim 1 has been amended to include the limitation of original claim 4, and claim 2 has been amended to include the limitation of original claim 5. Therefore, independent claims 1 and 2, and claims 3 and 6-17 depending therefrom, are allowable.

The Office Action indicates that no priority document has been received. Applicants note that the certified copy of the priority document (Japanese Patent Application No. 2001-299942) was filed on April 22, 2002. Applicants enclose herewith a copy of the transmittal with a certificate of transmission/ mailing, the front page of the certified copy of the priority document, and the date-stamped return postcard indicating that the certified copy of the priority document was mailed on April 22, 2002 and received by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office on May 2, 2002. Accordingly, the foreign priority claim is perfected, and acknowledgement of the same on the patent to be issued is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

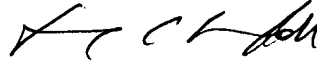
In view of the foregoing, Applicants believe all claims now pending in this Application are in condition for allowance. The issuance of a formal Notice of Allowance at an early date is respectfully requested.

Appl. No. 10/052,626
Amdt. dated October 1, 2004
Reply to Office Action of May 20, 2004

PATENT

If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, please telephone the undersigned at 650-326-2400.

Respectfully submitted,



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